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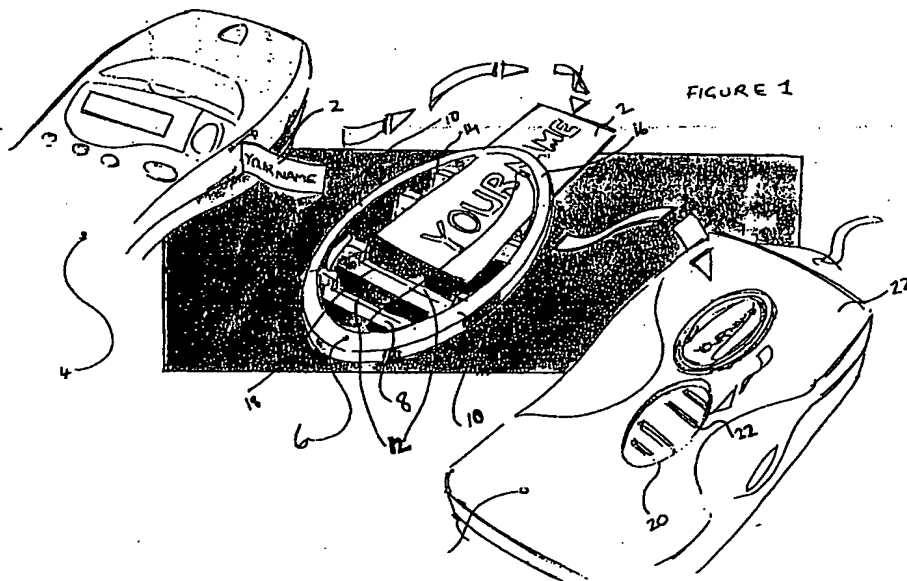
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(54) **Stationery products and label covers**

(57) A stationery product comprising a label cover for covering a label; and a recess for receiving said label cover, said label being received in said recess and

being covered by said cover, said label cover and said recess having an oval shape.



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This is because the corners can act as points of weakness. The curved shape may also be easier to mould if the label holder is to be moulded. The label holder can have any other suitable curved shape such as a circle or the like. The oval shape is preferred as it may better match the typical elongated shape of labels.

[0015] Whilst the use of the oval shape for the label holder 6 is preferred, it should be appreciated that in some embodiments of the present invention, the label holder may be rectangular, square or indeed any other shape having corners.

[0016] The label holder 6 shown in Figure 1 has four support slats 8 which extend between the longer sides 10 of the label holder 6. The label 2 is supported between the upper surfaces 12 of the slats and the lower surface of the cover part 14 of the label holder 6. The lower surface of the cover part 14 of the label holder is preferably planar. However, in some embodiments, the lower surface may be concave, following the convex upper surface 15 of the cover part. The upper surfaces of the label holder is itself curved so that it extends above the plane of the label. The outer profile of the upper surface forms part of an ovoid shape or any other suitable shape.

[0017] The label holder 6 has a frame 16 to which the four slats 8 are attached. The outside of this frame may be different from the cover part 14 of the label holder. The cover part 14 is transparent and may be clear or coloured. The frame 16 may be transparent or opaque. The frame 16 may be moulded together with the cover 14 or the frame 16 may be joined to the cover 14 after the components have been made.

[0018] As can be seen from Figure 1, the slats have a cutaway portion 18 which is arranged to accommodate the label. The length of the cutaway portion 18, in the longitudinal direction of each slat 8, corresponds generally to the width of the label 2 to be supported in the label holder. The label 2 is supported on the upper surfaces 12 at the base of each cutaway portion 18. The lower part of the slats may be coplanar with the plane containing the bottom of the frame 16, extend below the plane containing the frame 16 or be above the plane containing the frame 16.

[0019] The label holder 6 is received in an oval recess 20 of a product 22. The recess 20 extends below the planar surface of the product. The product 22 can be any suitable product, particularly an office or stationery item. The oval recess 20 has a shape corresponding to the outer circumference of the label holder 6. The slats 8 are arranged to be received in correspondingly shaped recesses 22 arranged in the oval recess 21. A snap fit connection, press fit connection, interference connection or any other suitable type of connection is made between the slat recesses 22 and the slats 8. For example, the slats 8 may be sized so that they only fit in the corresponding recesses 22 on the application of force and cannot subsequently be removed. The frame 16 may have a press fit connection, snap fit connection,

interference fit connection or any other suitable type of connection with the sides of the oval recess 20.

[0020] In an alternative embodiment of the present invention, the slats 8 are provided in the oval shaped recess 20 for receiving the label and are not part of the label holder. Indeed, the label holder may be considered to be a cover. The cover part 14 of the label holder is held in place in the oval recess using any suitable type of connection, such as discussed hereinbefore.

[0021] Various different types of connection between the cover and the recess are possible and are described in relation to some of the alternative embodiments hereinafter.

[0022] Reference is now made to Figures 2A and 2B which shows the application of embodiments of the present invention to an elastomeric product. In particular, Figure 2A shows the application of a cover 26 to an elastomeric ruler 24. Figure 2B shows the ruler in cross section, with the cover 26 in place. In this embodiment, there is a cover 26 which protects a label 2 (not shown). The cover 26 is made of a rigid material.

[0023] The cover 26 is arranged to be received in a recess 28 in the elastomeric ruler 24. As shown in Figure 2B, the bottom surface 30 of the cover 26 is planar. A label is sandwiched between this lower surface 30 and the bottom 32 of the recess 28. The sidewalls 34 of the recess are inwardly inclined from the bottom of the recess to the top. The sidewalls 36 of the cover 26 are inclined inwardly towards the lower surface 30. The cover 26 is put in place by pushing the cover 26 firmly into the recess. A interference fit, which is permanent, results and the cover 26 cannot then be removed again.

[0024] In this embodiment, the cover is made from a clear material with optical properties. In particular, the cover 26 is arranged to act as a magnifier glass to magnify the image on the label.

[0025] As can be seen in Figure 2B the upper surface 36 of the cover 26 is curved to define a convex surface. The outer profile of the cover 26 corresponds to part of an ovoid. There may be a frame portion 25 which extends around the circumference of the cover 26 and is planar before merging into the ovoid profile. The frame may be plain or decorated. The frame may be transparent or opaque.

[0026] Figure 2C and 2D show a cover 40 which is arranged to be received in a more rigid ruler 42 which is for example of a polypropylene material. The cover 40 is again received in a correspondingly shaped recess 44. The cover 40 has a similar outer profile 46 to the cover shown in Figures 2A and 2B. The cover 40 additionally has two flexible engagement projections 48. These engagement projections 48 are received in corresponding grooves 50 arranged in the bottom and side of the recess 44, as shown in Figure 2C.

[0027] These projections 48 are arranged on the two longer sides 52 of the cover 40. The projections 48 extend below the plane of the lower surface of the cover 40 and outwardly from the plane containing the sides 52

natively be a stepped portion of the groove. The interaction between the engaging portion 212 and the wider portion 214 retains the cover 200 in place once the cover has been pushed into the groove. The projection portion 206 is flexible enough to permit the engaging portion 212 to be pushed past the one side 208 of the groove 214.

[0041] Reference is made to Figure 10 which shows a cross section of a cover 222 which makes an elastic fit in a recess. The projection portions 206 may be omitted. The cover 222 is retained in position by the side walls 224 of the recess 226 for the cover. The sides 224 of recess may be bevelled. The bevelled sides can be peeled back to allow the cover 222 to be received in the recess. As can be seen the sides of the recess may cover the periphery of the upper surface of the cover.

[0042] Reference is made to Figure 11 which shows a cover 230 having a clear central part 232. The outer portions 234 of the cover are opaque, for example, as a result of texturing.

[0043] Figure 12 shows a clear cover 236 with a oval label 238 under it.

[0044] Figure 13 shows part of a stationery article with a recess 240 for receiving a cover. Within the recess is a further recess 242 for receiving the label. Slots 244 are provided at opposite ends of the bigger recess 240 for receiving projecting portions of the cover, such as described hereinbefore.

[0045] The cover may be styrene or any other suitable material.

[0046] Reference is now made to Figure 6 which shows a tape printer which can be used to print the labels to be inserted under the covers.

[0047] Figure 6 shows a plan view of a tape printing tape apparatus 102. The tape printer apparatus 102 comprises a keyboard 104, a display 106 and a cassette receiving bay 108. The tape printing apparatus houses at least one cassette 110 or tape holding case. The cassette houses a substrate tape 112. The substrate tape can be of any suitable form. For example, the heat substrate tape may be heat sensitive or alternatively may be one to which an image may be applied via an ink ribbon. If an ink ribbon is required, the ink ribbon may be provided in the same cassette or tape holding case or in a separate cassette or tape holding case. The substrate tape may be provided with a layer of adhesive in order to adhere the label to a surface. Alternatively, this adhesive layer may be omitted.

[0048] Where an ink ribbon is provided, the substrate tape passes an overlap with the ink ribbon to a print zone 114 consisting of a fixed printhead 116 and a platen 118 against which the printhead can be pressed to cause an image to transfer from the ink ribbon to the thermal printing tape. Thermal printing is one way in which this can be achieved although other techniques such as dry lettering or dry film impression may be used. Where no ink ribbon is provided, the printhead may be in direct contact with the thermally sensitive

substrate tape so that when the printhead is heated, an image is printed on the image receiving tape.

[0049] The keyboard 104 allows the user to enter data to define the image to be printed on the label. The keyboard may also be used to select label layout attributes and character attributes.

[0050] The display 106 may be a liquid crystal display which allows the data to be viewed as it is entered. The user can view all or part of the label to be printed. This facilitates the editing of the label prior to its printing as well as the data entry. The display 106 is also used to display various options which can be selected by the user. The display 106 may also display messages to the user, for example error messages or an indication that the print key should be pressed or actuated.

[0051] The tape printing apparatus may have a predetermined mode which can be used for printing labels suitable for use with any one or all of the covers described hereinbefore. In this mode, a predetermined length for the label is defined, the length being such that the label can be accommodated underneath the cover. The user selects this mode using the keyboard 104. Menu options may be displayed to the user which can be selected using a combination of cursor and enter keys. The user inputs the text or image to be printed on the label. The text or image may be automatically scaled in order to fit into the predetermined length. Alternatively, the user may be prevented from entering too many characters or from printing a label which is too long.

[0052] The printed label is cut by a cutter 120 to the predetermined length.

[0053] The label may be printed by any other suitable apparatus using any suitable printing technique or image applying technique.

[0054] Embodiments of the present invention are particularly applicable to office or school products such as:

scissors, rulers, hole punches (perforators), pencil cases, staplers, staple removers, envelope openers, files, filing trays, folders, small electronic items such as calculators or label printers and similar articles, plugs, computer equipment, printers.

[0055] The above list is not exhaustive and any other office or school commodity or any other product can incorporate a label cover embodying the present invention.

[0056] Embodiments of the invention can additionally be used in relation to any other product which requires labelling.

[0057] The label covered by the cover may include the name of the owner of the product in question, information identifying the product or information concerning the use of the product or any other type of information.

sidewardly extending projection is arranged between said skin and said article so as to retain the cover in position.

28. A combination as claimed in claim 23, wherein said member has a recess which is sized to receive said cover. 5
29. A combination as claimed in claim 28, wherein said member is of an elastomeric material. 10
30. A combination as claimed in claim 29, wherein said cover is fitted into said recess with one of the following types of fitting: interference fit; press fit; snap fit. 15
31. A combination as claimed in any of claims 23 to 30, with an article to which said member is attached.
32. A combination of a cover as claimed in any one of claims 4 to 22, with a article, said article being provided with means for receiving said cover. 20
33. A combination as claimed in claim 32, wherein said means for receiving comprises a recess shaped to accommodate said cover. 25
34. A combination as claimed in claim 31, 32 or 33, wherein said article is a stationery article.
35. A stationary product as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3 wherein said cover is as claimed in any one of claims 4 to 22. 30
36. A method of labelling a stationery product, said method comprising the steps of: 35
- providing a label containing information;
placing said label in a recess; and
covering said label with a cover, said cover being retained in place in said recess. 40
37. A method as claimed in claim 36, wherein said cover is as claimed in any of claims 4 to 22.
38. A kit for labelling a stationery product comprising: 45
- a cover for covering a label; and
a recess providing means for attaching to said stationery product, a label being received in said recess in use and said cover being received in said recess in use. 50

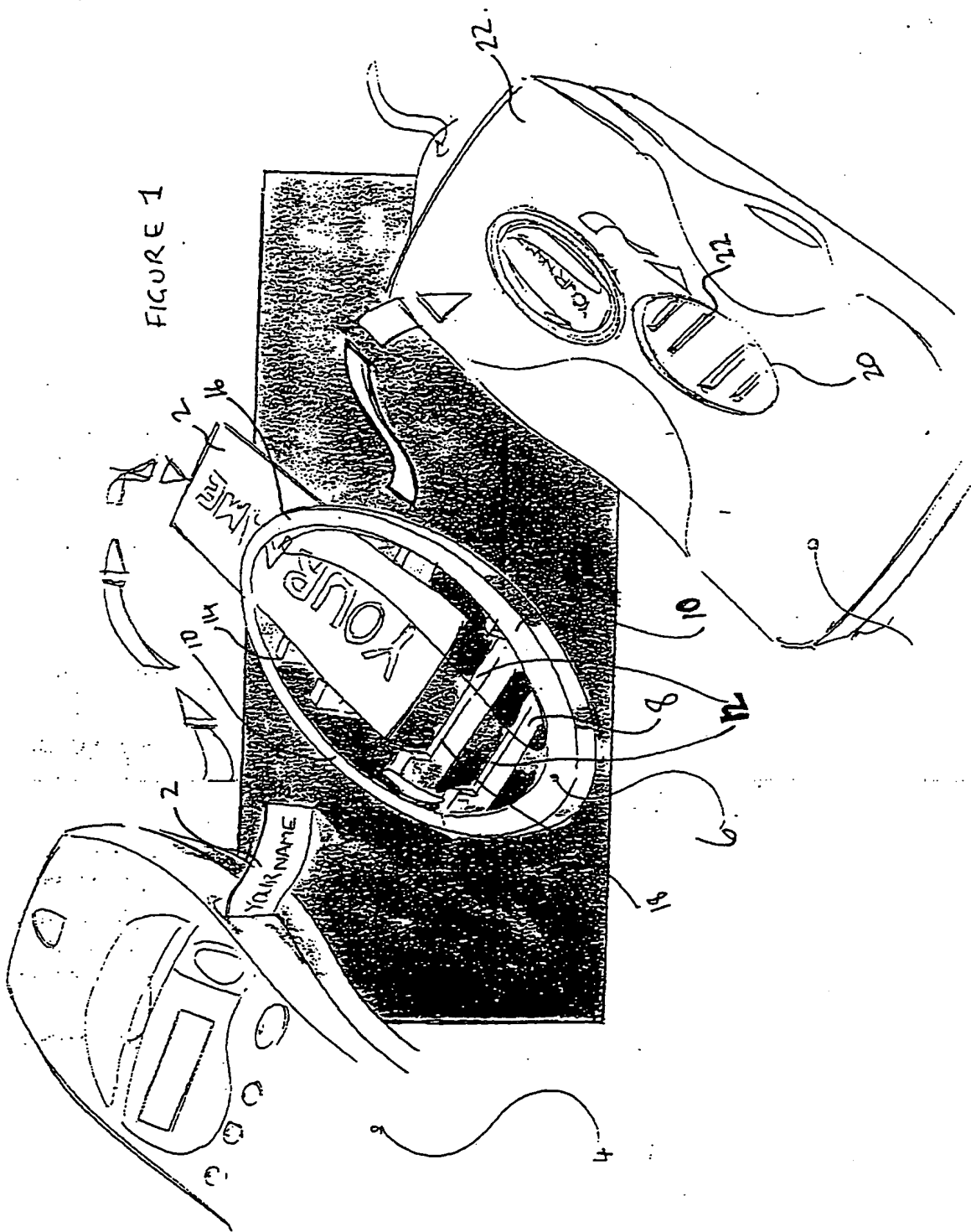


FIGURE 2A

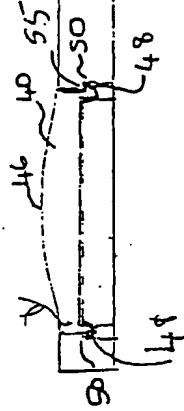


FIGURE 2B

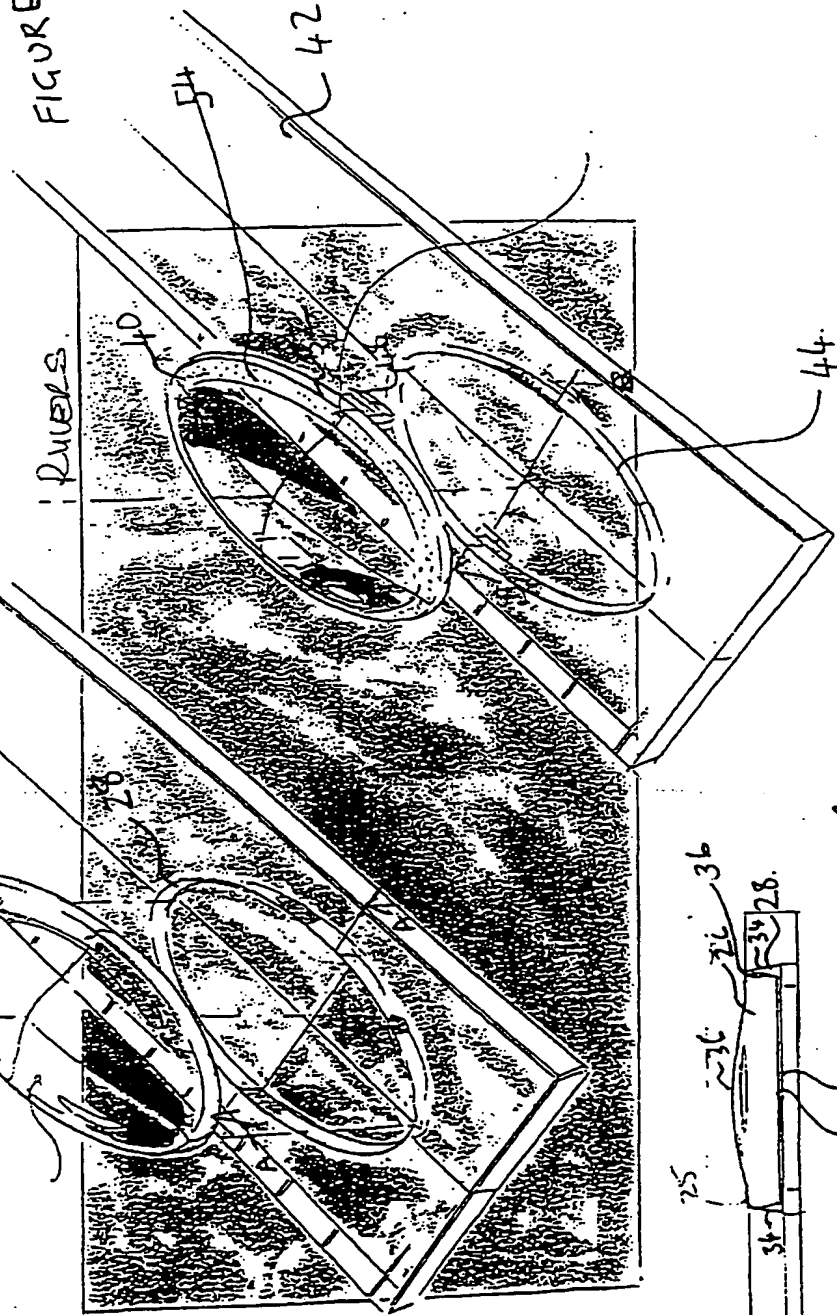


FIGURE 2C



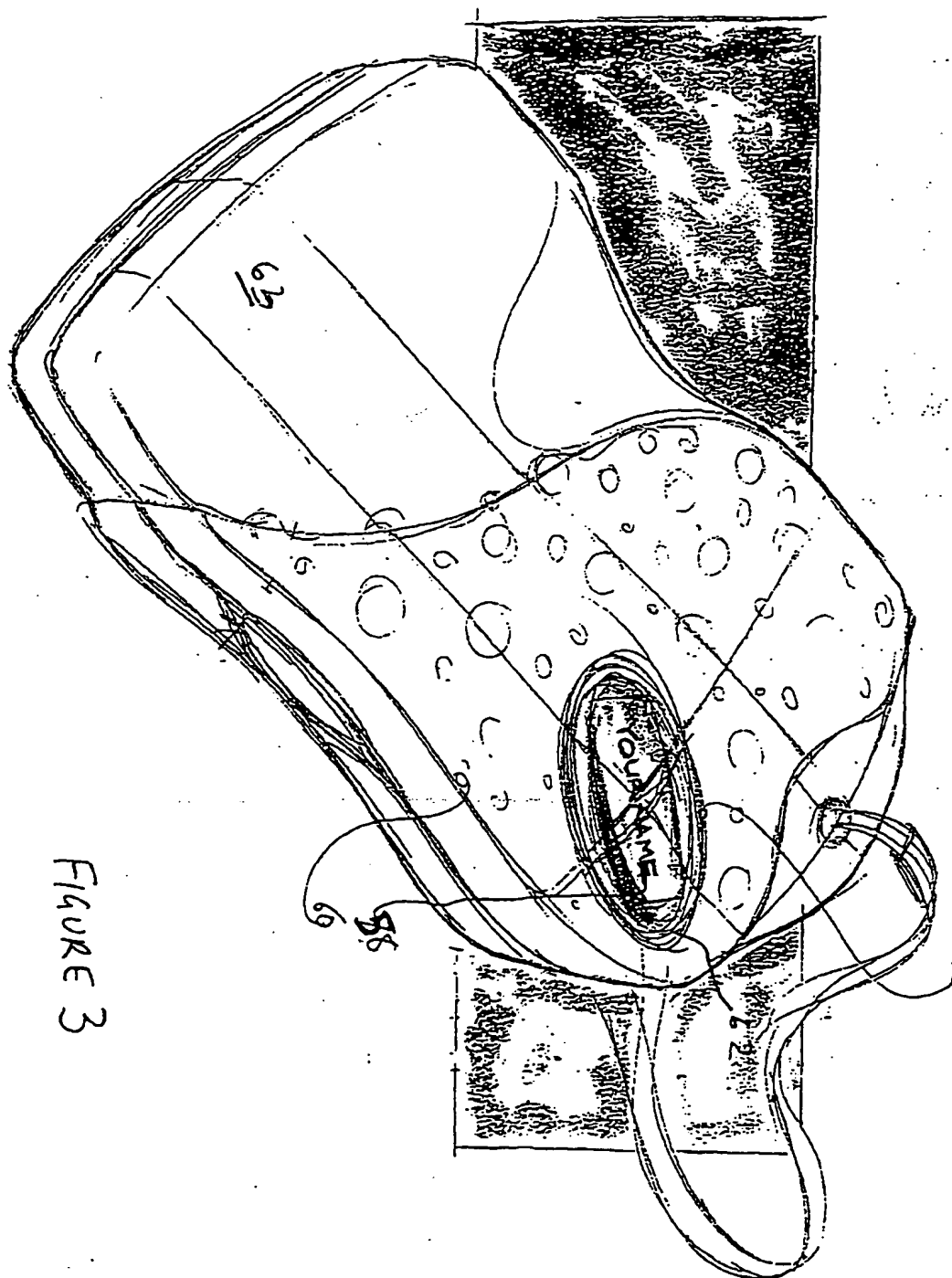
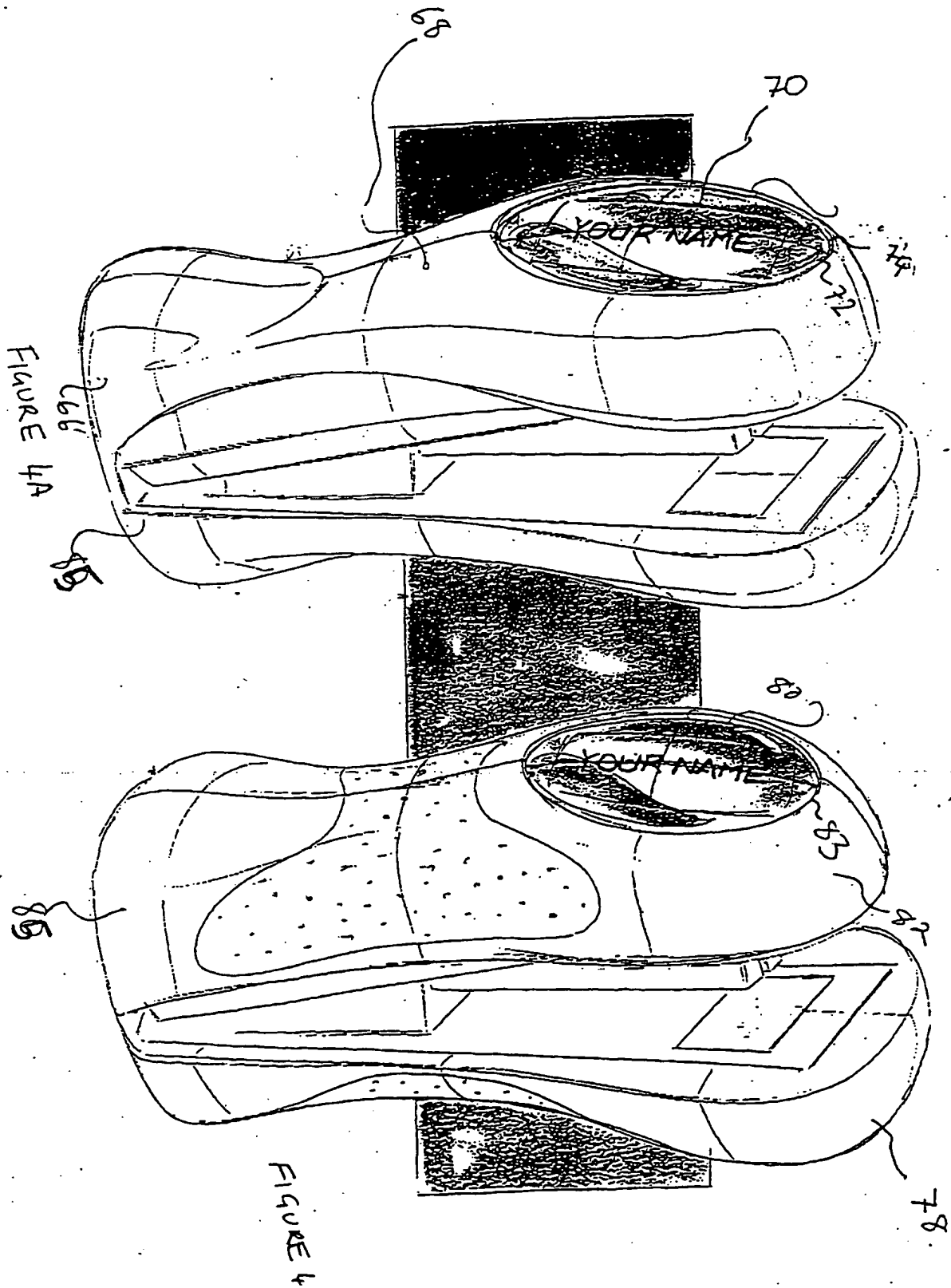


FIGURE 3



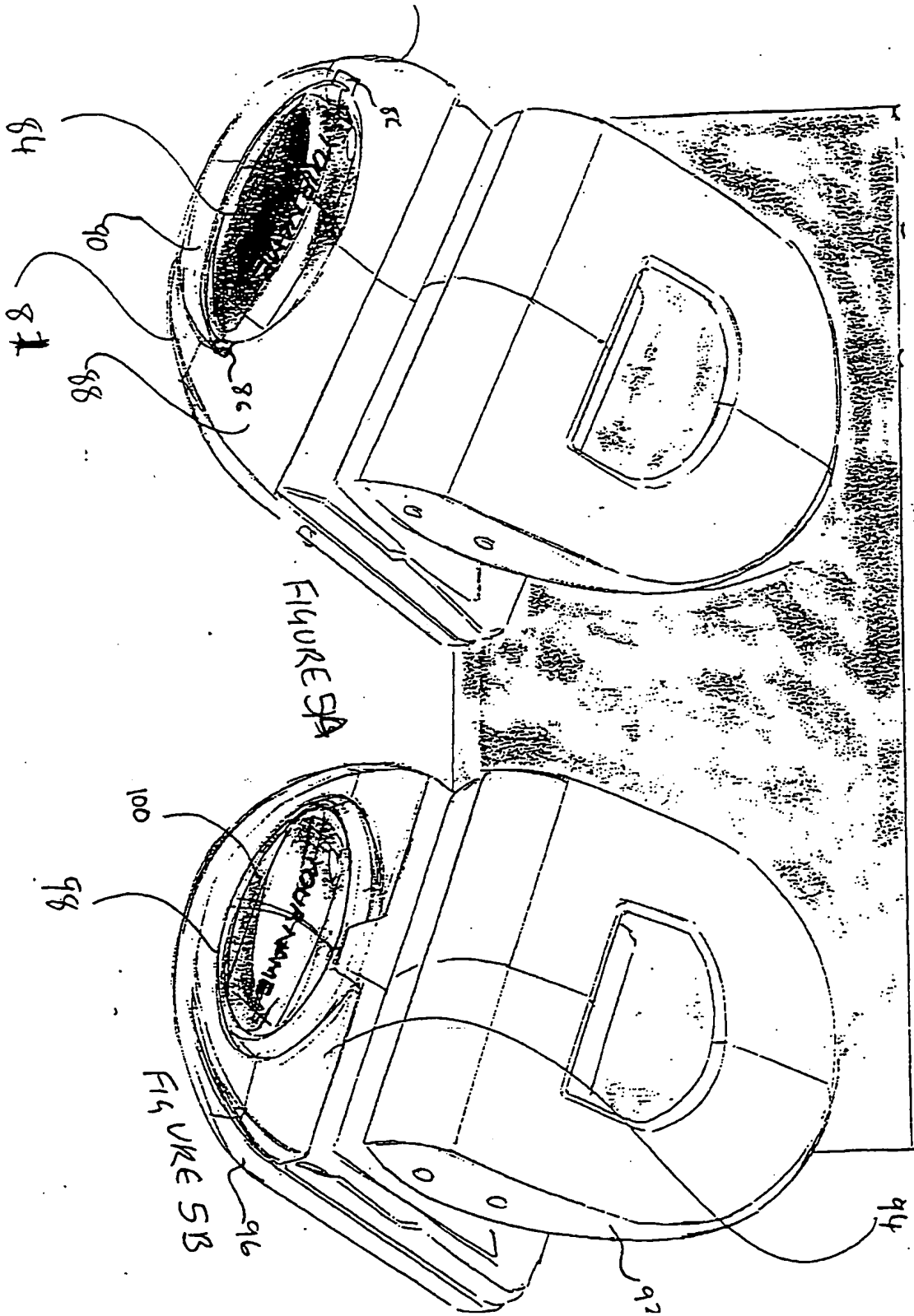


FIGURE 6

